
FUTURE JOBS FUND

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor John Williams, Economy Portfolio

Responsible Director – Richard Alty, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek agreement to release £370,500 Future Jobs Fund funding for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Summary

2. Darlington Borough Council has received a Future Jobs Fund grant for the provision of 57 job placements on behalf of a wider partnership that are committed to assisting medium-term unemployed residents of Darlington into sustainable employment. The total value of the grant is £370,500 for Darlington. This grant is to assist 19-24 year olds from across Darlington and people within its unemployment hotspots (Bank Top, Central, Cockerton West, Eastbourne, Haughton East, Lascelles, North Road, Northgate, Park East and Pierremont), back into sustainable employment by addressing barriers to employment and offering training opportunities.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that Cabinet agrees the release of Future Jobs Fund funding to assist the medium term unemployed residents of Darlington to access a job placement opportunity with training – which will assist them in obtaining long-term sustained employment.

Reasons

4. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) To enhance the environmental, social and economic well-being of the Borough.
 - (b) To support medium-term unemployed in Darlington reach their full potential and increase their chances of entering sustainable employment.
 - (c) This project is unique to Darlington in comparison to the other four local authorities within Tees Valley, as Darlington Borough Council does not receive funds such as LEGI (Local Enterprise Growth Initiative) and WNF (Working Neighbourhoods Fund).

Richard Alty
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)

Background Papers

K McGready : Extension 2680

S17 Crime and Disorder	<p>Any job placement will be set with Crime and Disorder in mind. Some job placements will be focused on improving the environmental features of the town and will therefore help people feel secure and safe.</p> <p>Unemployment and financial instability are proven to be key risk factors in terms of both juvenile and adult offending. The Council and its partners have developed a range of initiatives to support and improve access to training and employment for those at risk of offending within the Borough. Partners involved in this scheme are encouraged to support individuals at risk of offending or who have offended, however, this will be subject to partners discretion and recruitment procedures.</p>
Health and Well Being	<p>Project increases peoples aspirations and feeling of well being, engaging them as part of an active member of their local community.</p>
Sustainability	<p>All partners involved in the project have been asked to extend the job placement from 6 months to 12 months to offer a more sustainable job placement. Out of the 57 jobs, 33 of these have been extended beyond the initial 6 months which is equal to 55%. This is a very positive outcome considering Darlington does not receive other key regeneration funding.</p>
Diversity	<p>The Future Job Funded placements will be open to all who are eligible for the scheme.</p>
Wards Affected	<p>The eligibility of the Future Jobs Fund is split into 2 groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 19-24 year olds - across the whole of Darlington 2. 25+ - eligible if within unemployment hot spots – wards which have unemployment rates 1.5% above the national average. In Darlington – the following wards are eligible - Bank Top, Central, Cockerton West, Eastbourne, Haughton East, Lascelles, North Road, Northgate, Park East and Pierremont.
Groups Affected	<p>As stated above, there is an eligibility criterion which is open to all under 25, but for those who are outside of this bracket, the only restriction is where they live as they must be within an unemployment hotspot.</p>

Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This report is not a Key Decision
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This project particularly meets the ‘One Darlington’ priority of the Council’s SCS. It is ensuring that people are not disadvantaged by their lack of income, where they live or by another potential disadvantage. By assisting long term unemployed residents of Darlington into sustained employment, this project meets several of the priorities under the Prosperous Darlington theme such as increasing the average earning to narrow the gap between Darlington and the rest of the Country, increasing Darlington’s employment rate and increasing economic prospects for people living in the most deprived areas (unemployment hotspots). This project will contribute towards National Indicators NI166, NI153 and NI151.
Efficiency	Involvement in the Future Jobs Fund project will involve a commitment of officer time, particularly within the Economic Regeneration and External Funding teams. The projects identified for the funding can be accommodated within officers’ existing work programmes.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

The National Picture

5. Nationally, the Future Jobs Fund is an allocation of around £1 billion to support the creation of jobs for long term unemployed young people and others who face significant disadvantage in the labour market. The fund is run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). The fund aims to create the following jobs:-
 - (a) 100,000 people between 19-24
 - (b) 50,000 people in unemployment hotspots (areas where unemployment is 1.5% above the national average).
6. The fund will support those who have been unemployed for more than 10 months (for those in the 19-24 bracket) or 12 months (for those in the employment hotspot bracket), by getting them a job offer or training lasting at least 6 months. There is a strong preference for partnership bids – which should aim for the creation of a minimum of 30 jobs over a 6 month period. Other criteria includes:
 - (a) All jobs MUST benefit the local community
 - (b) The work will be under way quickly
 - (c) Jobs must be for at least 25 hours a week paid at least national minimum wage
 - (d) The FJF allocation for each job will not exceed £6,500

The Tees Valley Picture

7. All 5 LA's in the Tees Valley have applied for FJF and have received confirmation that their bid has been successful. The Darlington bid was submitted to DWP on the 10th July, and approval was granted on the 14 September 2009.
8. Unlike all the other authorities across the Tees Valley, Darlington does not have access to key regeneration funding such as Working Neighbourhoods Fund. There are therefore limited employability projects and opportunities in Darlington compared to the other authority areas within the Tees Valley. The Future Jobs Fund in Darlington is therefore crucial in ensuring that Darlington's unemployed residents can have access to a programme which seeks to offer them sustainable employment opportunities with training and dedicated support.

The Darlington Picture

9. In May 2009, it was decided that Darlington Borough Council would work alongside eVOLution in pulling together a bid for the fund as the funding criteria encourages local authorities and third sector organisations to develop joint bids. They were successful in identifying 11 other partners. The following tables identify the partners and the number of jobs each will be creating, the phasing and timings of the job starts, and the category of jobs that will be created.

Table 1: Darlington FJF by partner:-

Organisation	Number of FJF jobs
Darlington Borough Council	14
Humantics Community Interest Company	5
Darlington Association on Disability	1
Age Concern Darlington	1
Morrison Trust	1
Darlington Methodist Church	1
Advocacy Together	2
Darlington Mind	12
Darlington Football in The Community	3
Groundwork Trust West Durham & Darlington	4
eVOLution	3
Tees Valley YMCA	8
Darlington Credit Union	2
TOTAL JOBS	57

Table 2: Darlington FJF by month:-

Month	No of FJF jobs
October 2009	10
November 2009	12
December 2009	4
January 2010	8
February 2010	9
March 2010	14
TOTAL JOBS	57

Table 3: Darlington FJF by category of job:-

Category	No of FJF jobs
Community/Social – Direct Community Support positions	18
Community/Social – Administrative Support positions	9
Community/Social – Specialist Support positions	12
Environmental focused positions	6
Youth focused positions	7
Sport focused positions	5
TOTAL JOBS	57

10. For Darlington, the criteria for the jobs means that there is a defined, and small, pool of individuals who are eligible for this project. As the project is only looking initially for 57 jobs, this is realistic for the size of the pool in Darlington. For all individuals referred onto a FJF funded post, there are a number of benefits which are designed to improve their prospects for entering long-term sustainable employment:-

- (a) The referral process is to be as easy for the target groups as possible. All individuals referred through JobCentre Plus, will have an initial assessment of their strengths, weaknesses and potential barriers to employment.
- (b) This initial assessment of an individual will identify any barriers that that individual faces. Once in employment through the scheme, the employer and the placement support worker will then dedicate time to assist the individual in addressing/minimising these barriers so that they are manageable and where ever possible, overcome completely. Through doing this intensive work, the individual will be able to enter into long-term sustained employment after the FJF intervention as they will be able to address/minimise such barriers.
- (c) Confidence building - for an individual, being unemployed for 10 months plus can mean that the thought of entering employment is quite daunting. Through the support from the employers and the placement support worker, individuals will be able to “acclimatise” to the world of work much easier.
- (d) Experience building though the initial assessment, training needs will be identified and in the vast majority of cases will be very transferable and not job specific. Therefore as well as receiving confidence and experience, they will also be given the skills (and where applicable qualifications) which will assist greatly in their ability to secure further employment. Where appropriate this may include accredited and/or vocational training.
- (e) All employers will provide the individual with employability skills such as job search and CV writing – which will give individuals the skills and knowledge to look and apply for jobs in the future. This will be either provided in house or through using other partner organisations – which have expertise in running such provision.
- (f) N.B If it transpires that a chosen individual is not suitable for a FJF job, then the employer can use the remainder of the funding left for that post to secure another individual through FJF.

Finance

11. As each job attracts £6,500 worth of funding, the total amount of leverage into Darlington is **£370,500**. Each job/employer requires different amounts out of this £6,500 per job. However, for each job there is a minimum of 5% ring fenced as a contribution to the post of ‘Job Coach’. In total there is £21,678 available to employ a ‘Job Coach’ who will work to support all partners and individuals on the programme. This element is thought to be essential as it gives partners greater capacity to work with medium term unemployed and will ensure individuals stay in a job and feel supported for the full 6 months of their job.
12. As well as this Job, there is also 1 Future Job Fund Administrator (made up of two 6 month placements) which will be a Future Job Funded position. These posts will work and be supervised by Darlington Borough Council who as lead partner are responsible for establishing systems, submitting claims and keeping all paperwork/evidence trails etc. Where possible, existing systems such as those set up for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded ‘Skills 4 Me’ project, will be used to avoid duplication of effort. These two posts will be dedicated to the project (one starting in October and one starting in March) and both the salary and training costs of these posts are covered through the Future Jobs Fund.

13. Taking into account that Working Neighbourhoods Funding is not available in Darlington, it is very positive that some partners have managed to use their own internal resources to guarantee that out of the 57 jobs, 33 can be extended beyond 6 months to a value of £170,000. This is equivalent to 55% of the total jobs.

Resource Implications

14. The project requires the following resources:
- (a) Job Coach
 - (b) Admin support
 - (c) Management support for individual jobs
 - (d) Management support for the project
15. The Job Coach and Admin support costs are part of the total project and are being recovered through the FJF as outlined above under 'finance'. The management support for individual jobs will be the responsibility of those departments the job sits under. Darlington Borough Council has a total of 14 jobs which are as follows (please note all these jobs are new, and not existing positions):

Darlington Borough Council Future Job Funded Positions

Service	No of posts	Job Role
Libraries and Community Learning	2	Learning library procedures to enable them to train to become a qualified librarian specialise in a particular area of the library and support the bibliography service on stock control.
Libraries and Community Learning	1	Driving mobile library, setting up for community events, undertaking general maintenance of the vehicle.
Libraries and Community Learning	1	Liase with awarding bodies, invigilating, supporting learners through the examinations process and procedures.
Street Scene	5	Ground maintenance including grass cutting, shrub & bed maintenance & litter collection
Regeneration	1	Assist with the public consultation/engagement for a master planning process/conservation area character appraisals and general administration and support.
Regeneration	1	To assist with electronic scanning on the Electronic Document Management Storage (EDMS) system and general admin duties.
Regeneration	1	To assist with the administration of the Council's Planning and Economic Strategy Unit - the main duty of the post is to assist the work the team carries out directly with the Community and Voluntary Sector including funding searches, compiling and issuing monthly funding bulletin.
Regeneration	2	To assist with the administration of the FJF, including the registration of jobs, timesheets and progressions as well as running filing systems to keep all information on file.

16. The employment status of individuals employed through the FJF Scheme is presently being determined nationally by DWP. It is likely that they will be deemed to be on work placement, as opposed to being treated as bona fide employees.

17. As Darlington Borough Council does not have a team dedicated to programmes such as WNF, it is using existing project management and monitoring resources to manage the overall project. A maximum of 7.5 hours per week of existing staff time will be diverted to this function across Regeneration. The project will also have implications on other sections across the Council – such as finance, HR and legal. However, it is envisaged that the impact will be minimal and likely to be predominantly in the start up of the project with ongoing input from finance through the management of budgets, payroll, etc.

Processes

18. Referrals to fill the jobs will come via Jobcentre Plus (JCP). Darlington Borough Council Officers have regular contact with JCP which will ensure that as soon as the information is available it will be implemented across the project and the partnership.

Outcome of Consultation

19. This project has been consulted with as follows:
- (a) Project partners – the 11 partners as outlined in Table 1 have been fully consulted with during the bid writing stage. They are all committed to hosting job placements, which will be directly employed through their own organisations. A partnership agreement is being drafted to ensure all partners are aware of their roles and responsibilities.
 - (b) On the 21st August, the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) were made aware of the FJF, as part of a wider presentation on addressing worklessness in Darlington. HR representatives, elected members with an interest in HR issues and Union representatives attended the meeting.
 - (c) Throughout the bidding process, Darlington Borough Council has consulted with Job Centre Plus in shaping and defining the Darlington project. This consultation is ongoing and Economic Regeneration Teams have built up strong working relationships with Job Centre Plus.

Conclusion

20. Darlington does not receive the key regeneration funds that the other four Local Authorities within the Tees Valley receive. Therefore by accessing the Future Jobs Fund, the Council is to provide a project which is unique for Darlington, in assisting long term unemployed residents into sustainable employment – by addressing barriers to employment and through the use of training. A total of 57 people will benefit from the first stage; however there may be scope to extend this into further stages. This project will target 19-24 year olds from across Darlington and people within its unemployment hotspots (Bank Top, Central, Cockerton West, Eastbourne, Haughton East, Lascelles, North Road, Northgate, Park East and Pierremont). This will also have a wider positive effect of creating opportunities for employment in Darlington, in response to job losses suffered as a result of the combined impact of the credit crunch and economic downturn.